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# INDIA'S STAND IN COP26



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EDITED BY : MS. ARATI PATIL

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## FROM EDITOR'S DESK...

COP26, the 26<sup>th</sup> meeting of Conference of Parties, was held in Glasgow, Scotland hosted under UK Presidency, from 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021-12<sup>th</sup> November 2021. It brought together 120 world leaders and over 40,000 registered participants, including 22,274 party delegates, 14,124 observers and 3,886 media representatives. It's a critical summit for global climate action. By nearly reducing global emissions to half by 2030, and reaching the goal of 'net-zero' by 2050, there is still chance to limit warming to 1.5 degrees.

This issue of Greenergy will focus on 'India's stand in COP26'. It tells more about COP26 and the decisions made in order to achieve the desired outcome for our planet! So let's dig in to know more!

**- MS. ARATI PATIL**

# INDIA'S STAND-IN COP26

India's Stand in COP26 | Greenergy | February 2022

## What needs to be achieved at COP26?

1. Mitigation: Secure global net-zero by mid-century and keep 1.5 degrees within reach.

-Accelerate the process to transit to electric vehicles.

-Speed up the process to discontinue the utilization of coal.

-Reduce Deforestation

-Promote investment in renewables

2. Adaption: Adapt to protect communities and natural habitats.

3. Finance: Mobilise finance (at least \$100 billion in climate finance per year by 2020.

4. Collaboration: Work together to deliver. (Finalise the Paris Rulebook and accelerate action to tackle the climate crisis)

The United Kingdom, in partnership with Italy, hosted the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP) between 31 October to 12 November 2021 in the Scottish Event Campus (SEC) in Glasgow, UK.



UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Sir David Attenborough attended COP26 conference in Glasgow.

This summit brought around 120 leaders together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

## What is Paris Agreement?

The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on Climate Change. It was adopted by 196 Parties on 12 December 2015 at COP21 in Paris and entered into force on 4 November 2016. Its goal is to limit global warming to a level below 2 degrees Celsius, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The Paris Rulebook was completed at COP26 after 6 years of discussions.

## Facts

Under the Glasgow leaders' declaration on forests and land use, more than **140 countries**, jointly possessing more than **90 per cent of the world's forests**, pledged to halt and **reverse deforestation and land degradation** by 2030, while promoting inclusive rural transformation.

Costs for adaptation to climate change are also **five to ten times** greater than currently available public adaptation finance, according to estimates in a report by the UN Environment Programme.

A dozen governments pledged **\$413 million** in funding to the Least Developed Countries Fund, while the Glasgow pact includes a goal for developed countries to double adaptation funding to developing countries to **\$40 billion by 2025**.

## India's stand-in COP26

India, for the first time, made a promise to cut down its emissions to net-zero by 2070.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi pledged to target net-zero, at the Glasgow Summit.



Prime Minister of India at COP26 in Glasgow

India is the world's fourth-largest emitter of carbon dioxide after China, the US, and the EU. The emission rate of India was 1.9 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per head of population in 2019, whereas US and Russia emitted 15.5 tonnes and 12.5 tonnes respectively for the same year.

## India's net-zero pledge

Prime Minister Narendra Modi made five commitments at COP26:

1. India will achieve net-zero emissions by 2070
2. India will bring its non-fossil energy capacity to 500GW by 2030
3. India will bring its economy's carbon intensity down to 45% by 2030
4. India will fulfil 50% of its energy requirement through renewable energy by 2030
5. India will reduce 1 billion tonnes of carbon emissions from the total projected emissions by 2030



India had "clearly put the ball in the court of the developed world" by announcing 500 gigawatts (GW) of non-fossil electricity capacity, half of the energy from renewables, a reduction of emissions by one billion tonnes and emissions intensity of the GDP by 45% by 2030, according to Dr Arunabha Ghosh, Chief Executive Officer of the Council on Energy, Environment and Water, a leading climate think tank. This is quite an effective step for one of the world's largest emitters, which gets more than 50% of the country's electricity from coal.

"This is real climate action. Now India demands \$1tn (£722bn) in climate finance as soon as possible and will monitor not just climate action but also climate finance," Dr Ghosh said.

According to Vikas Pandey from BBC news, "Prime Minister of India is seen being serious about climate change but without compromising India's economic potential. "

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*"We are already in trouble. The stability we all depend on is breaking."*

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- Sir David Attenborough on Climate Change at COP26



Written and designed by:

Vedanthi Joshi

Email: [vedanthij\\_23@yahoo.com](mailto:vedanthij_23@yahoo.com)

## COP26: WHAT DID IT ACHIEVE?

- The 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) concluded with the adoption of the Glasgow Climate Pact.
- The agreement was the first to target specific energy sources.
- But COP26 had its detractors - climate activist Greta Thunberg called it 'a failure'.
- While attempting global net zero by 2050 will likely create a fierce battle between industrialized and developing nations.

On 13 November 2021, the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) concluded 'successfully' with the adoption of the Glasgow Climate Pact. There have, however, been a variety of assessments as to what the convention actually achieved. For example, environmental activist Greta Thunberg denounced the summit: "It is not a secret that COP26 is a failure.... Two weeks of business as usual, blah, blah, blah!" (Nikkei 2021).

Prime Minister Boris Johnson of the UK, the host country, enumerated what he aimed to achieve at COP26: (1) securing global net zero by mid-century and keeping 1.5°C global warming within reach; (2) adapting to protect communities and natural habitats; (3) mobilising finance; and (4) completing negotiations on the Paris Agreement rule book. Although incomplete, it may at least be said that these results have been achieved. I believe COP26 was a success – despite some reservations – surpassing previous expectations.

Of the above expected outcomes, Britain placed the greatest emphasis on its aim of holding increases in global average temperature to 1.5°C. The Paris Agreement states:

This Agreement...aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change...by: Holding the increase in the global average temperature to well



below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.... In order to achieve the long-term temperature goal..., Parties aim to reach global peaking of [greenhouse gas] emissions as soon as possible...and to undertake rapid reduction thereafter...so as to achieve a balance between anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century.

The most demanding target of 1.5°C underlies the aims of global net zero by 2050 and a 45% reduction in global emissions by 2030, as well as other goals such as phasing out coal power, ending the sale of internal combustion automobiles (Weder di Mauro 2021).

That is why, at the 2021 G7 Cornwall Summit hosted in Britain, the UK first incorporated into the Summit Communiqué the 1.5°C target, as well as the goal of net zero by 2050 and other initiatives, including transitioning away from unabated coal capacity and halting public financing for coal power abroad.

Britain's next strategy was to align with Italy, the 2021 G20 Rome summit host, and have similar messages reflected in the G20 Leaders' Declaration. However, China, India, Russia, Saudi Arabia and other countries strongly opposed such a move, arguing that an emphasis on the 1.5°C and 2050 net-zero goals was almost equal to the renegotiation of the Paris Agreement. China and India, both highly dependent upon coal, pushed back strongly against eliminating coal from their domestic energy mixes, and Russia and Saudi Arabia followed suit over concerns that a ban on coal might be extended to all fossil fuels, including oil and natural gas.

As a result, the G20 summit only reconfirmed the temperature targets of the Paris Agreement. Phasing out domestic coal capacity was not included as a G20 commitment, which disappointed US President Biden and UK Prime Minister Johnson.

Based on these events, I predicted that COP26 was unlikely to reach an agreement beyond what was agreed at the G20 summit. However, the Glasgow Climate Pact adopted at COP26 includes, among other commitments: (1) a resolution to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C; and (2) recognition that limiting the rise in temperature to 1.5°C requires reducing global emissions by 45% by 2030, relative to the 2010 level, and to net zero around mid-century.

Consequently, the decade starting 2020 is regarded as a 'critical decade', and leaders call on COP27 to adopt a work plan to scale up actions during this time. The Pact also requests the parties to revisit and strengthen their nationally determined contributions, as necessary to align with the Paris Agreement temperature goal by the end of 2022.

This surpasses what was achieved at the G20 summit. Predictably, China, India, Saudi Arabia and other nations reacted negatively to broaching the 1.5°C target. While G7 nations and emerging countries often clash at G20, COP gives more space to vulnerable, less-developed nations and small island nations that are susceptible to the damage wreaked by climate change. Environmental NGOs can also exert more influence, inside and outside of the chambers.

China, India, and other emerging nations are concerned about the effect that the 1.5°C target will have on their economic growth. Resource-rich nations are worried about the effect on their fossil fuel exports. Meanwhile, small island nations and less-developed nations anticipate that raising the temperature target will increase their need for assistance to adapt to climate change as well as manage related losses.

During an informal stocktaking by the COP26 President, the plenary erupted into great applause whenever strong support for the 1.5°C goal was expressed. Britain succeeded in leveraging that sentiment to push the 1.5°C goal to the forefront.

In addition, the Glasgow Climate Pact includes the wording "to accelerate the...phasedown of unabated coal power and phase-out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies..." At the United Nations General Assembly in September 2021, President



Xi announced that China would not build any new coal-fired power projects abroad, which allowed the G20 to include in its message – like the G7 – a halt to public financing for new coal capacity abroad.

Yet, the COP26 agreement extends to domestic coal capacity. The original proposal was worded “phase-out coal”, which was much broader and went beyond the electricity-generating sector. Encountering strong opposition from China, India, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and other nations, just as with the 1.5°C target, the wording was modified to “phase-out of unabated coal power.” However, India, China, South Africa, and other nations were still not satisfied. India argued that “inexpensive and stable electric power for poor people is the top priority for countries.” “Phase-out” was revised to “phasedown” and the wording was added: “while providing targeted support to the poorest and most vulnerable in line with national circumstances and recognising the need for support towards a just transition.”

Although the EU, small island nations, and other countries rallied in unison against this, they accepted it reluctantly from the standpoint of passing a package that would achieve consensus.

Thus, the 1.5°C target was strongly highlighted and the COP26 outcome included the formulation of a very ambitious work plan. This was the first time that wording targeting specific energy sources was included in any decisions related to the Paris Agreement. While toned down from the original proposal, the Glasgow Climate Pact is lauded by environmentalists as a historic agreement.

### **Heavy consequences of the 1.5°C goal**

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While Britain’s diplomatic skill in working out an agreement beyond the line agreed at the G20 deserves accolades, we cannot simply be jubilant. The strong UK push for the 1.5°C target and net zero in 2050 has significantly altered the nature of the

Paris Agreement, a document that strikes a delicate balance between the top-down approach of setting temperature targets for the entire world and the bottom-up approach where each country sets its own targets according to specific national circumstances.

Aiming for global net zero by 2050 will likely create a fierce battle between industrialised and developing nations over limited carbon budgets through the year 2050. Already India has argued that if developed nations strongly push global net zero by 2050, they should achieve net zero much earlier than 2050, go into negative emissions thereafter and give carbon space to developing nations. India has also contended that if developed nations are demanding that developing nations raise their nationally determined contributions to ultimately achieve net-zero emissions, they should substantially increase financial flows to developing countries, to \$1 trillion annually.

While the world is significantly off track from the 2°C pathway, Europe and the US pushed through ambitious targets. This will likely come back to haunt industrialized nations over the coming decade, in the form of incessant pressure from developing nations calling them to achieve carbon neutrality much more rapidly and to significantly increase assistance to developing countries.

### **Will the COP standard make the world happy?**

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The Glasgow Climate Pact calls for countries to strengthen their nationally determined contributions in line with the Paris Agreement temperature goal and submitted the new figures by the end of 2022, but it is unlikely that China and India will revise their targets. Both nations, which have embraced the 2060 and 2070 net-zero targets, will no doubt argue they are respecting the Paris Agreement provision of “net zero in the second half of this century”.

Instead, as the host country of the 2022 G7 Summit, Germany – whose Green Party is in the country's ruling coalition – could propose that G7 nations move the 2050 net-zero target forward and further raise the 2030 nationally determined contributions to urge China and India to follow suit. The result would be further expansion of the market for Chinese made solar panels, windmills, and storage batteries, creating a windfall for China.

The argument over coal phase-out is likely to resurface with certain target years and could further extend to the phase-out of all fossil fuels. Such discussions are divorced from the reality of the energy landscape. A major cause of the energy crisis – which is overwhelming Europe and spreading to Japan – is that supply has not kept up with the increase in energy demand generated by the economic recovery. A significant cause of that imbalance is the stagnation in upstream investment in petroleum and gas.

Meanwhile, the US and EU nations have put their names to a joint declaration to end public financing for the fossil-fuel sector. This could further stagnate upstream investment, resulting in a tightening of energy supply in the future as well. The environmental fundamentalism originating in Europe has demonised coal and, in turn, raised the global demand for gas. While the Biden administration is prohibiting domestic oil production in federal lands, it has called on OPEC and Russia to ramp up production. And while Britain is at the forefront of coal bashing, power shortfalls due to very weak wind and skyrocketing gas prices obliged it to mobilise old power plants to maintain power supply. These are contrary to the climate narrative that calls for the phase-out of fossil fuels.

Experience shows that when a secure and affordable energy supply is at risk, the climate agenda can easily be set aside. We should ask ourselves whether the proliferation of the COP standard that rejects realistic discussions will make the world happier.

Will global dissemination of the standards created at these climate conferences, which excludes realistic discussion, really be a positive step for the world? We need to think long and hard about that.

*This column first appeared on the website of the [Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry](#).*

*Source: COP26 - was the global climate summit a success or failure? | World Economic Forum (weforum.org)*

## COP26: TOGETHER FOR OUR PLANET

The UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow (COP26) brought together 120 world leaders and over 40,000 registered participants, including 22,274 party delegates, 14,124 observers and 3,886 media representatives. For two weeks, the world was riveted on all facets of climate change — the science, the solutions, the political will to act, and clear indications of action.

The outcome of COP26 – the Glasgow Climate Pact – is the fruit of intense negotiations among almost 200 countries over the two weeks, strenuous formal and informal work over many months, and constant engagement both in-person and virtually for nearly two years.

“The approved texts are a compromise,” said UN Secretary-General António Guterres. “They reflect the interests, the conditions, the contradictions and the state of political will in the world today. They take important steps, but unfortunately the collective political will was not enough to overcome some deep contradictions.”

Cuts in global greenhouse gas emissions are still far from where they need to be to preserve a livable climate, and support for the most vulnerable countries affected by the impacts of climate change is still falling far short. But COP26 did produce new “building blocks” to advance implementation of the Paris Agreement through actions that can get the world on a more sustainable, low-carbon pathway forward.

## What was agreed?

### *Recognizing the emergency*

Countries reaffirmed the Paris Agreement goal of limiting the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5 °C. And they went further, expressing “alarm and utmost concern that human activities have caused around 1.1 °C of warming to date, that impacts are already being felt in every region, and that carbon budgets consistent with achieving the Paris Agreement temperature goal are now small and being rapidly depleted.” They recognized that the impacts of climate change will be much lower at a temperature increase of 1.5 °C compared with 2 °C.

### *Accelerating action*

Countries stressed the urgency of action “in this critical decade,” when carbon dioxide emissions must be reduced by 45 per cent to reach net zero around mid-century. But with present climate plans – the Nationally determined Contributions — falling far short on ambition, the Glasgow Climate Pact calls on all countries to present stronger national action plans next year, instead of in 2025, which was the original timeline. Countries also called on UNFCCC to do an annual NDC Synthesis Report to gauge the present level of ambition.

### *Moving away from fossil fuels*

In perhaps the most contested decision in Glasgow, countries ultimately agreed to a provision calling for a phase-down of coal power and a phase-out of “inefficient” fossil fuel subsidies – two key issues that had never been explicitly mentioned in decisions of UN climate talks before, despite coal, oil and gas being the main drivers of global warming. Many countries, and NGOs, expressed dissatisfaction that the language on coal was significantly weakened (from phase-out to phase-down) and consequently, was not as ambitious as it needs to be.



### ***Delivering on climate finance***

Developed countries came to Glasgow falling short on their promise to deliver US\$100 billion a year for developing countries. Voicing “regret,” the Glasgow outcome reaffirms the pledge and urges developed countries to fully deliver on the US\$100 billion goal urgently. Developed countries, in a report, expressed confidence that the target would be met in 2023.

### ***Stepping up support for adaptation***

The Glasgow Pact calls for a doubling of finance to support developing countries in adapting to the impacts of climate change and building resilience. This won't provide all the funding that poorer countries need, but it would significantly increase finance for protecting lives and livelihoods, which so far made up only about 25 per cent of all climate finance (with 75 per cent going towards green technologies to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions). Glasgow also established a work programme to define a global goal on adaptation, which will identify collective needs and solutions to the climate crisis already affecting many countries.

### ***Completing the Paris rulebook***

Countries reached agreement on the remaining issues of the so-called Paris rulebook, the operational details for the practical implementation of the Paris Agreement. Among them are the norms related to carbon markets, which will allow countries struggling to meet their emissions targets to purchase emissions reductions from other nations that have already exceeded their targets. Negotiations were also concluded on an Enhanced Transparency Framework, providing for common timeframes and agreed formats for countries to regularly report on progress, designed to build trust and confidence that all countries are contributing their share to the global effort.

## **Focusing on loss & damage**

Acknowledging that climate change is having increasing impacts on people especially in the developing world, countries agreed to strengthen a network—known as the Santiago Network – that connects vulnerable countries with providers of technical assistance, knowledge and resources to address climate risks. They also launched a new “Glasgow dialogue” to discuss arrangements for the funding of activities to avert, minimize and address loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change.

There were many other significant deals and announcements – outside of the Glasgow Climate Pact – which can have major positive impacts if they are indeed implemented. These include:

### **Forests**

137 countries took a landmark step forward by committing to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030. The pledge is backed by \$12bn in public and \$7.2bn in private funding. In addition, CEOs from more than 30 financial institutions with over \$8.7 trillion of global assets committed to eliminate investment in activities linked to deforestation.

### **Methane**

103 countries, including 15 major emitters, signed up to the Global Methane Pledge, which aims to limit methane emissions by 30 per cent by 2030, compared to 2020 levels. Methane, one of the most potent greenhouse gases, is responsible for a third of current warming from human activities.

### **Cars**

Over 30 countries, six major vehicle manufacturers and other actors, like cities, set out their determination for all new car and van sales to be zero-emission vehicles

by 2040 globally and 2035 in leading markets, accelerating the decarbonization of road transport, which currently accounts for about 10 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions.

## **Coal**

Leaders from South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States, France, Germany, and the European Union announced a ground-breaking partnership to support South Africa – the world’s most carbon-intensive electricity producer— with \$8.5 billion over the next 3-5 years to make a just transition away from coal, to a low-carbon economy.

## **Private finance**

Private financial institutions and central banks announced moves to realign trillions of dollars towards achieving global net zero emissions. Among them is the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero, with over 450 firms across 45 countries that control \$130 trillion in assets, requiring its member to set robust, science-based near-term targets.

Source: [COP26: Together for our planet | United Nations](#)

## NEWS UPDATES

### **UN partnership aims to combat microplastics in cigarettes**

2 February 2022



A new UN partnership announced on Wednesday aims to raise awareness about the environmental and health impacts of microplastics in cigarette butts, the most discarded waste item worldwide.

*Source:* [Climate and Environment | UN News](#)

### **Women building a sustainable future: The Mexican violinist who saved the Sierra Gorda**

6 February 2022



Forty years ago, Martha Isabel Ruiz Corzo, known as Pati, left the Mexican city of Querétaro with her family in search of a simple rural life. Instead, she ended up leading and inspiring a group of some 17,000 local environmental activists, devoted to protecting the remote and beautiful Sierra Gorda.

*Source:* [Climate and Environment | UN News](#)





**Studio 888, C S No 13700  
Local Board Colony, Near Udyog Bhavan  
SANGLI-416416  
MAHARASHTRA, INDIA  
+91 888 842 4888  
[abhalmaya888@gmail.com](mailto:abhalmaya888@gmail.com)**